



# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*

# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

So, members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' bunny?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing, exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springfield, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet," Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

## 54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

## SOCIETY

MRS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.

433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

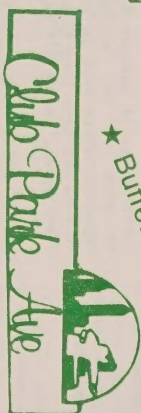


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

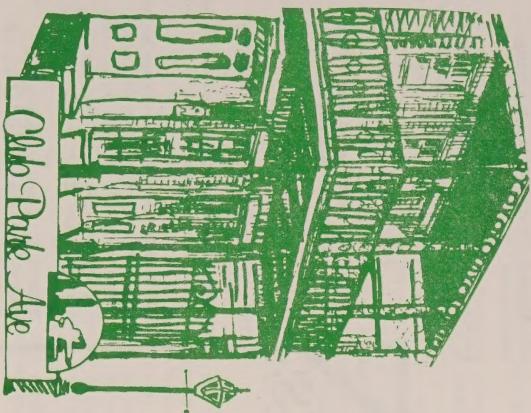
- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



(205) 433-9105  
7 S. Joachim St.  
Mobile, AL

(904) 599-9143  
115 E. Park Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL



The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:  
"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.  
How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.  
How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.  
Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CFA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

**13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175**

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J., and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Outure and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population, "witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natallie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

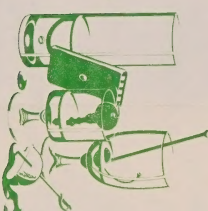
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiting efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT - DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drg Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As was my voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPECIAL SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE  
25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
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ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament  
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26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament  
27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard

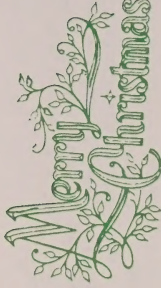
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No cover.

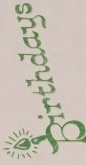
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No cover.

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CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for your 13th year of existence, you're with as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the Reaching Miss Gay Bloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: B. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID D. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL LAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81 HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO SUZURLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOWER TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

CLASSIFIED ADS

PLUMBING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES. Expert service. Call evenings after 6 or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior painting, wallpaper. Organize your precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask for Shirley.



AZALEA CITY FLORIST



"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"  
433-3038

George Coulter, owner  
NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME!



215 Conti Street • 438-9139



10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years



# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel!"

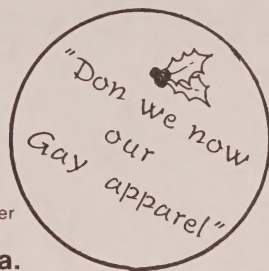
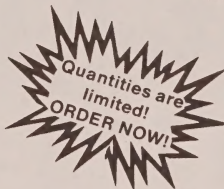
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards ..... \$ 4.00\*  
10 cards ..... 7.00\*  
25 cards ..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

-----  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.**

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

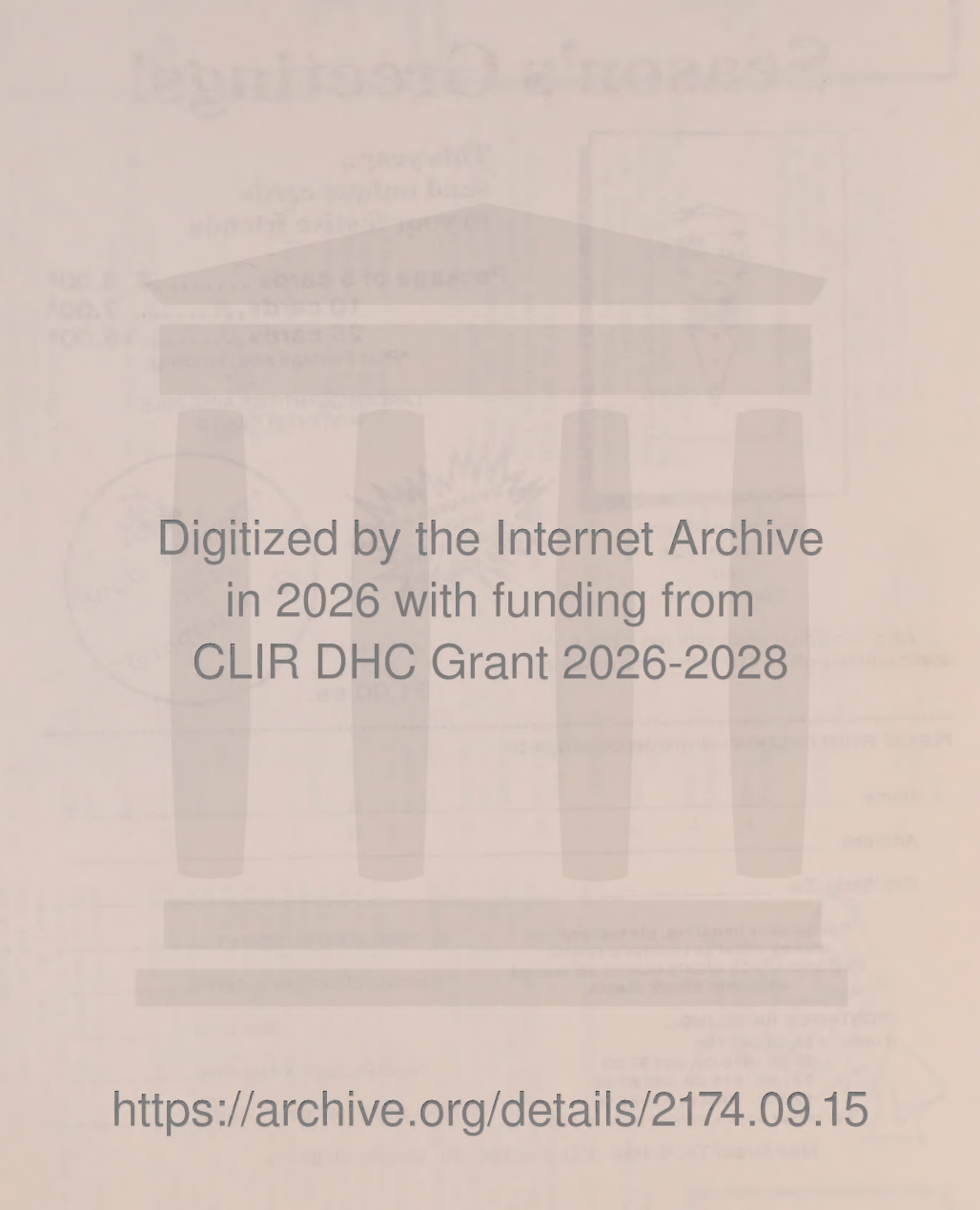
Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616





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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS

SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

FACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY

JOY  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM



Merry  
Christmas



TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

HAILELULAH

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR --

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedo and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springfield, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message. "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

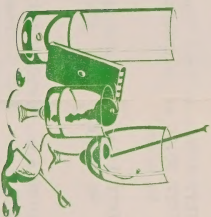
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th decided to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osafie.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Spectral Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



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- SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament
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- CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

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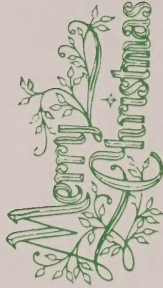
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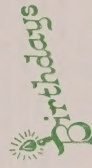
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- DAVID D. December 29th
- LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL LAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81 HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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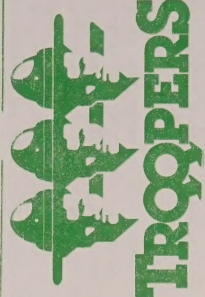
DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior painting, wallpaper. Organize your precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask for Shirley.



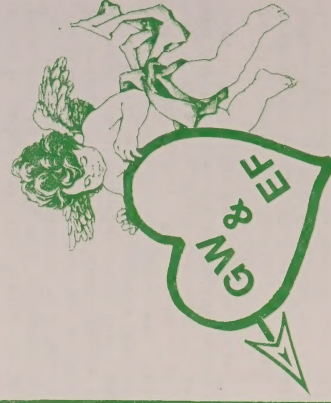
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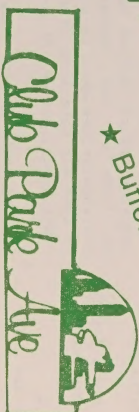


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

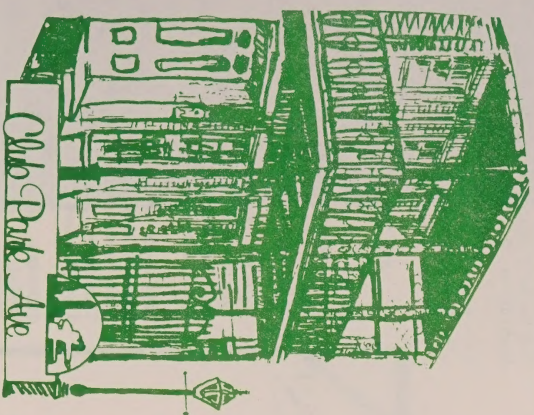
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- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

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## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "homosexuality", Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person. The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith. How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it!" This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CFA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant

CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament

CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover





MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

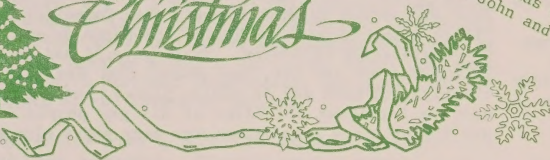
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

Merry Christmas



THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

JOYOUS NOEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

HA! FLUJAH

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

476-9142

Gay

Help-line



# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards.....15.00\*

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if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

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\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

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# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot e) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gray, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people and community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher'," and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold that we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

## 54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

## SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Plitt, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenorm and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

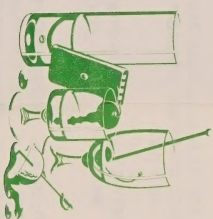
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Staters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, Ga.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

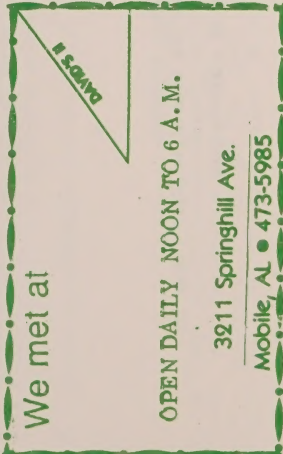
The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

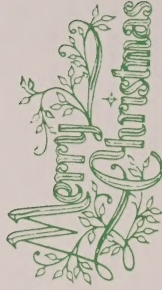
OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

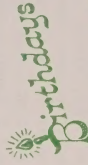


- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV  
ICE
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S  
26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament  
27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS  
JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR  
1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard  
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.  
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.  
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you're with  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reaching Miss Gay Filoxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
DANN! D. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBENI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PAINTING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
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precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



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10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years

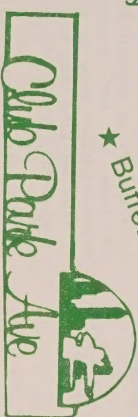


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco  
with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown  
by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a  
very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise**  
from our mother club in Tallahassee.

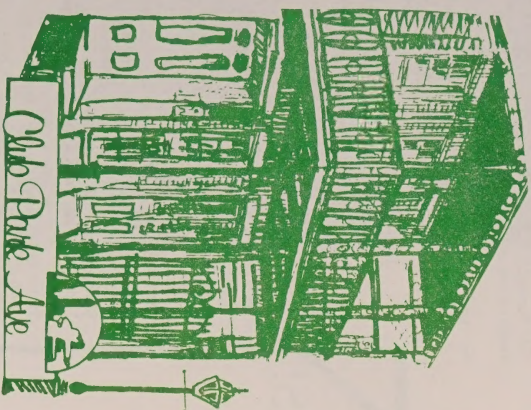
- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



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Mobile, AL

(904) 599-9143  
115 E. Park Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL



The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex.  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person. The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6227 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHOP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant

CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel!"

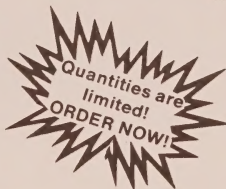
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
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2¼" diameter  
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**For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.**

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

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**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

PEACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

JOY  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral

Merry Christmas



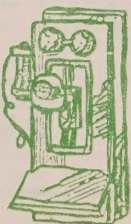
HA! FUJAH



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot e) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher'," and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful. In that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she hosted the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold that we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.

433-9141

54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population, "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters. I haven't been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven case of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfettered efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each saw some special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Oatfile.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT- DECEMBER 15, 1985

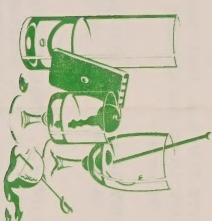
Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 196.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term. Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.

ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament

MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

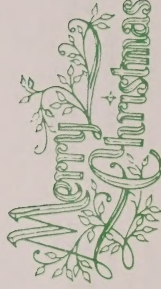
1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

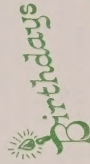
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH.W  
No cover.

5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you with  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Biloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN'S December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
TIPY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBENI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOWER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

CLASSIFIED ADS

PRINTING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
padding, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



AZALEA CITY FLORIST

"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"  
433-3038

George Coulter, owner  
NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME!



215 Conti Street • 438-9139



10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years



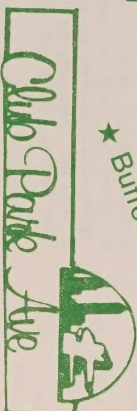
# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK

7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



(205) 433-9105  
7 S. Joachim St.  
Mobile, AL

(904) 599-9143  
115 E. Park Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL



The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "Advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need.  
Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.  
How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.  
How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.  
Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it!" This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Runny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight-SHOW no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sickness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

-----  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

FACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY



Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

JOY  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

HA! FLUJAH

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNK  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine, in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gays, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSTRIS

The Order of Ostris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras Ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Ostris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took of 'Teacher'," and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

CORRAL

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

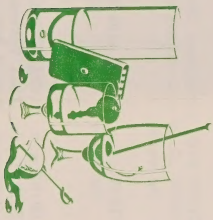
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

### AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osirile.

### SECOND AIDS BENEFIT- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Calloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, haul me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

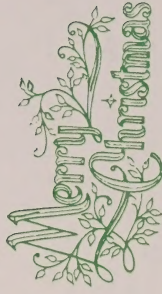
3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

1986

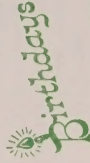


- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARCE AND SHIRLEY'S
- 26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS
- JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR
- 1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for your 13th year of existence, you're with a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the Reeking Miss Gay Bixol.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID: December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL LAMBEAT (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81 HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5th. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARCE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years

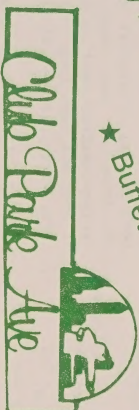


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest.. Miss Toni Denise from our mother club in Tallahassee.

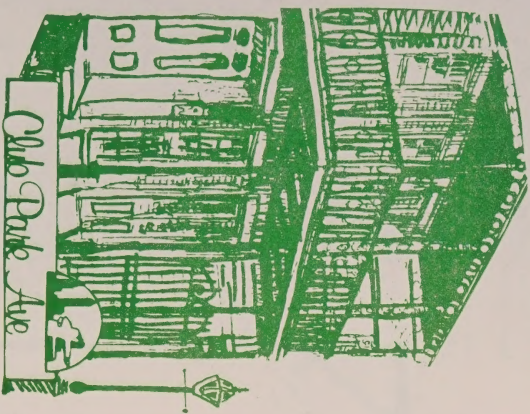
- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

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The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard



## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MOC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblessed and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6377 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW no cover.
- SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW no cover
- UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHOP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6 1/4" x 4 1/2" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards.....15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2 1/4" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

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**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY  
Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
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MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
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THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

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YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
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From the Gang at the Corral

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

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THE ESQUIRE HOUSE  
TO MICHAEL  
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HAULEWIAH

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
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Gay  
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## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing. WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine." in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot (ie) let to change its name to Gay 'N G), and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m.

Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in a community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," she said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' bumper?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing, exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springfield, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting in the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.

433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

# CORRAL

54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Msgr. who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population, "fitness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osirle.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT- DECEMBER 15, 1985

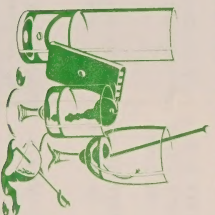
Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198. Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

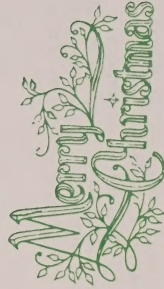
OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

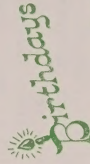


- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV  
ICE
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S
- 26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS
- JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR
- 1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you're  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Biloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
DANN: B. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBEK (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PLUMBING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
painting, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



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433-3038

George Coulter, Owner  
NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME



TROOPERS

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10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years

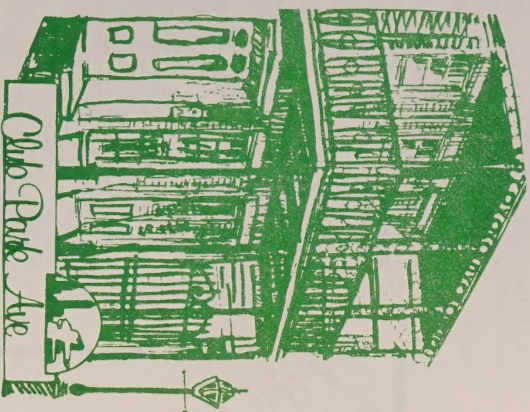
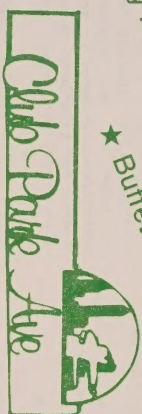


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



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Mobile, AL Tallahassee, FL

The Gulf Coasts  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex.  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "herald angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "glad tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.

How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

- Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510
- Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510
- Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

- DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)
- SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.
- CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
1 to 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.
- TROOPERS Check with them for  
their special plans  
CORRAL for New Year's  
ESQUIRE



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

**13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175**

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

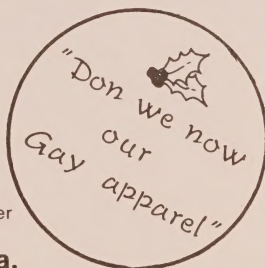
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

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**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

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City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR  
-- EDDIE F.

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE  
TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

Merry Christmas



THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot (e) met to change its name to Gay 'N GAY, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras Ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' bumper?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what I was seen for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was used primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold that we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to be considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

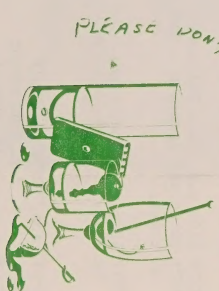
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfailing efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the 'Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

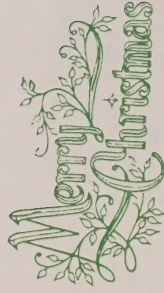
The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3911 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV  
Tournament
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S
- 26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

- 1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



AZALEA CITY FLORIST



"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"

433-33038

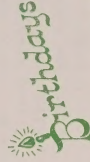
George Coulter, owner

NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME



TROOPERS

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN B. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
RUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOWER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

CLASSIFIED ADS

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Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.  
DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
padding, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.

10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years



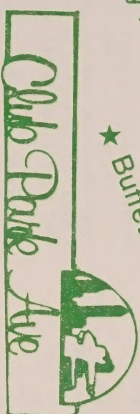


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

★ Champagne  
★ Party Favors  
★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
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(205) 433-9105 (904) 599-9143  
7 S. Joachim St. 115 E. Park Ave.  
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Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality! Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "herald angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.

How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT MESSAGE FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am-till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament

CORRAL 9:00 p.m. - Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.

ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel!"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

-----  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

PEACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

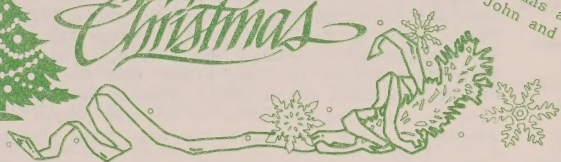
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY  
Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert



Merry Christmas



JO  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

HALLELUJAH

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY

A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives. Our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that "LOVE REQUIRES SHARING, SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH, FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful. In that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way. 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she hosted the John Birchers on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

## 54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natilie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osirile.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual, Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

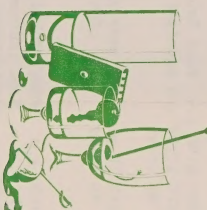
## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament  
27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW

No cover.

4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHW  
No cover.

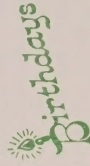
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, your 4th  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Rehabbing Miss Gay BLOXI.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN L. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
IAMBENI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

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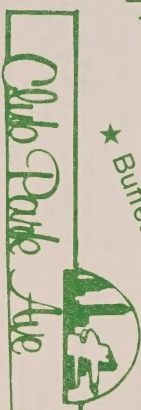


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## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "homosexuality; Roles, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person. The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith. How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS - Check with them for  
CORRAL - their special plans  
ESQUIRE - for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
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25 cards..... 15.00\*

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Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

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Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
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MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mob ile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedo and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a numer of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

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# SOCIETY

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FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pennsylvania and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J., and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natilie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

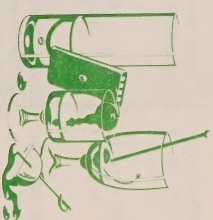
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osafite.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

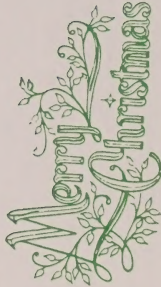
1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.

5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you're  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Balozi.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: D. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
TAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

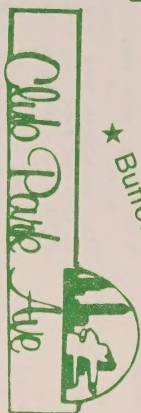


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest.. **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

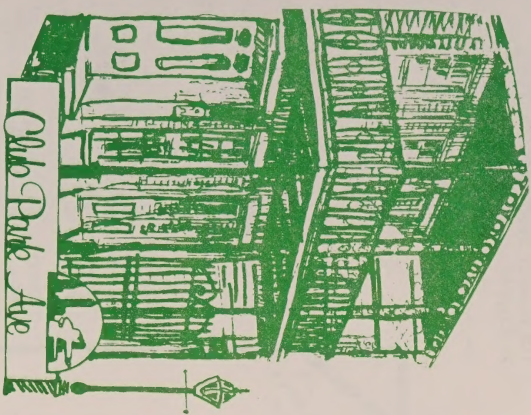
- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



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7 S. Joachim St.  
Mobile, AL

(904) 599-9143  
115 E. Park Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL



The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:  
"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

December 11: Those "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 18: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

December 25: What is standing in the way of your being a whole person. The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 30: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be. In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith. How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 31: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it!" This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
their special plans  
CORRAL for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNTARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

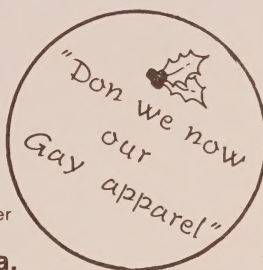
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6 1/4" x 4 1/2" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

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**\$1.00 ea.**

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Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

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\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS

SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY  
Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert



Merry Christmas



HAULUJAH

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY

A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christmas coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that "LOVE REQUIRES SHARING. SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE, STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH, FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot (e) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gays, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedoed and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing, exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful. In that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springfield, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold that we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

SOCIETY

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433-9141

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Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.  
FRI - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in Mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population, "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

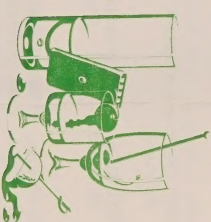
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

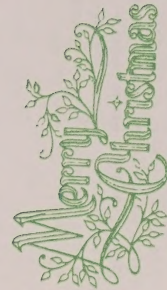
OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

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Mobile, AL • 473-5985

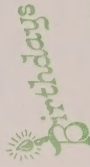


- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
Tournament  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE AND SHIRLEY'S
- 26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATIONS
- JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR
- 1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for your 13th year of existence, you are as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the Reeling Miss Gay Biloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
DANN! -- December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID -- December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL LAMBEAT (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81 HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PRINTING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES. Expert service. Call evenings after 6 or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.  
DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior painting, wallpaper. Organize your precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask for Shirley.



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10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

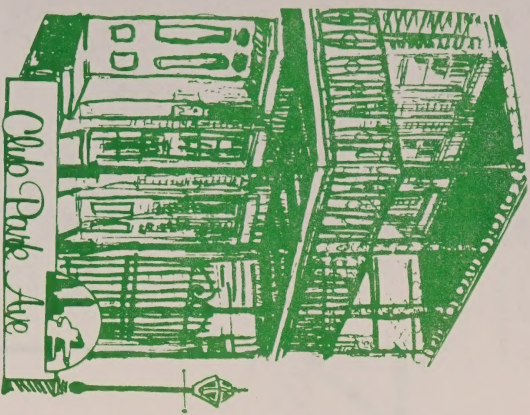
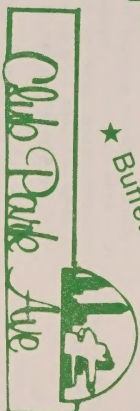


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
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The Gulf Coasts  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the

## Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORKSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament
- 10 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 11 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 12 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 14 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 16 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 18 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 19 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel!"

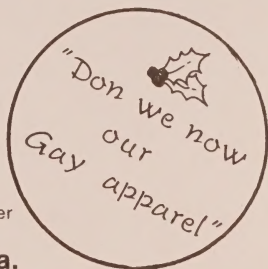
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
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2¼" diameter  
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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees;  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

May Everyone Find Peace, Hope, and  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

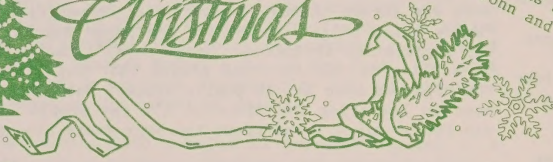
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

Merry Christmas



THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

JOYOUS NOEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

HAULELUAH

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot'ie) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedo and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful. In that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way. 'Out of your armoirs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birchler on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

Weekdays - Noon thru  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

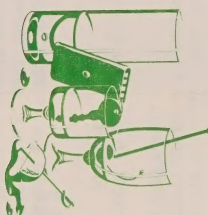
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Ostrle.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198. Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

1:30 PM

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament  
27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

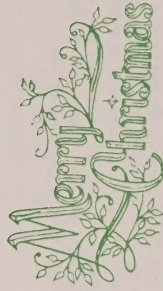
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW

No cover.

4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.

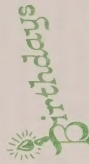
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, your growth  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Biloxi.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN L. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

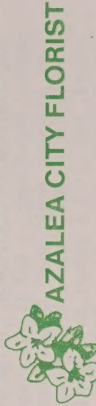
SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBKEI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PRINTING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
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previous collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



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"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"  
433-3038

George Coulter, owner

NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME



TROOPERS

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10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

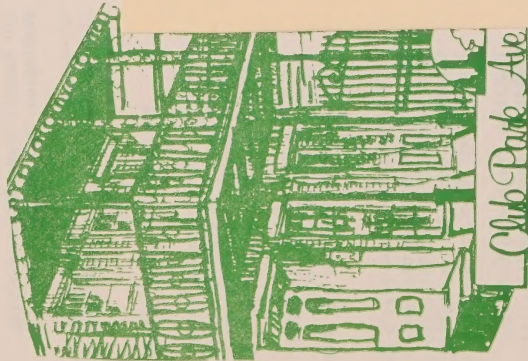


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco  
with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown  
by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a  
very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise**  
from our mother club in Tallahassee.

★ Champagne  
★ Party Favors  
★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



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Tallahassee, FL

(20  
75

t Complex  
nest in  
it and  
ime Room,  
rtyard

Club Park Ave

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.

How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am

GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-nees AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. - Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heftlin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
1p 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

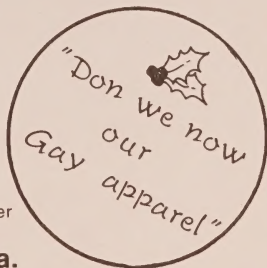
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards ..... \$ 4.00\*  
10 cards ..... 7.00\*  
25 cards ..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

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**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

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**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

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For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

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**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE  
TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

PEACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

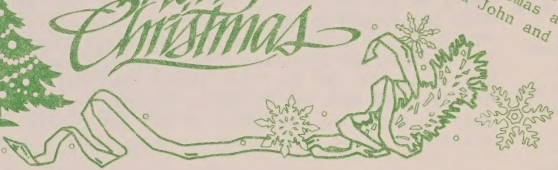
CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY  
Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM



Merry Christmas



TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

HALLELUJAH

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM  
MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNK  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay  
Help-line



# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

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For larger orders, please write or call

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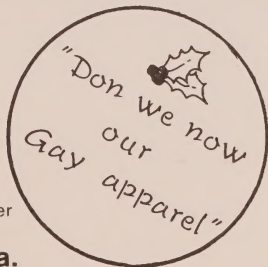
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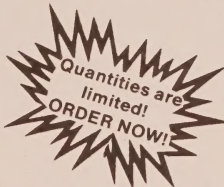
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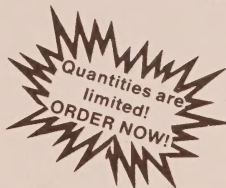
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# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings. Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Other members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gray, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSTRIS

The Order of Ostris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedoed and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Ostris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.

433-9141

54 So. Conception

433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

New. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Hearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency. "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try, and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natilie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

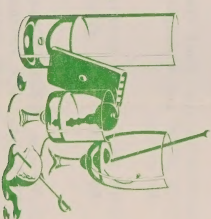
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neill, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Oetlis.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW

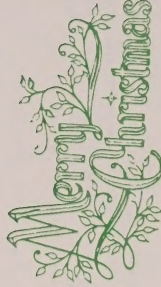
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV  
25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament  
27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for  
your 13th year of existence, you with  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reaching Miss Gay Hloli.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANNI B. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
TAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

CLASSIFIED ADS

MOVING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
painting, wallpaper. Organize your  
previous collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



AZALEA CITY FLORIST

"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"

433-3038

George Coulter, owner

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10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years

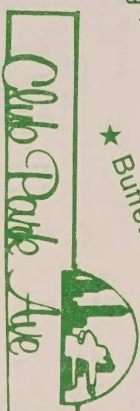


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



(205) 433-9105  
7 S. Joachim St.  
Mobile, AL

(904) 599-9143  
115 E. Park Ave.  
Tallahassee, FL



The Gulf Coasts  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MGC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.

How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our arch-enemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. - Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. - Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover



# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

PEACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAJ  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY



Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

HALLELUJAH

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Church members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mot (e) bet to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedoed and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' bumper?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing, exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birchler on the Av1 Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

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MISS BETTY - OWNER  
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FRI - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Kap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

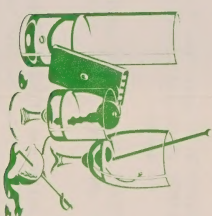
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cumspolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p. 28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

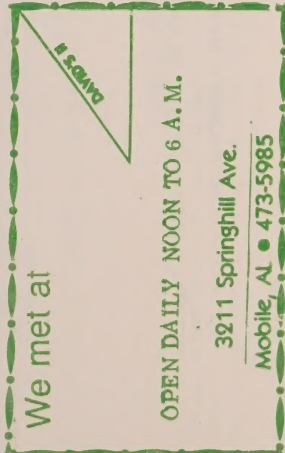
The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.

ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament

MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

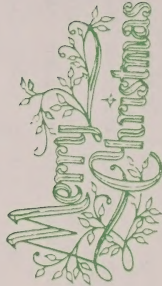
1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

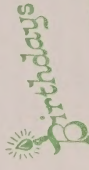
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHW  
No cover.

5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for  
your 13th year of existence, you're with  
us as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reaching Miss Gay Biloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: D. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
IAMBENI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5th. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

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TROOPERS

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10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years

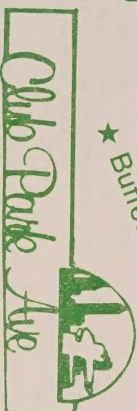


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

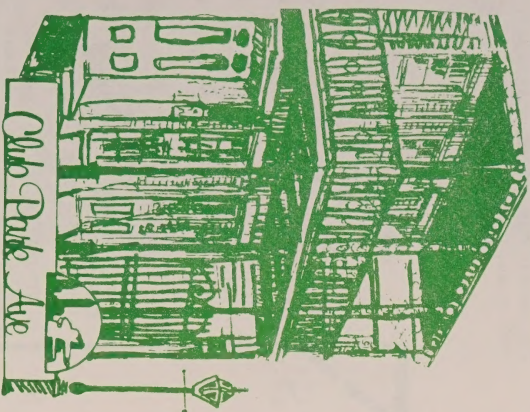
Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

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## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.

How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS.. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

- Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510
- Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510
- Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

- DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)
- SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.
- CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.
- TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
for New Year's



## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - MISS Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover





MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS

SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY



Merry  
Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO LARRY

A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING.  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Gather members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras Ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedoed and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful. In that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

CORRAL

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Mademform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

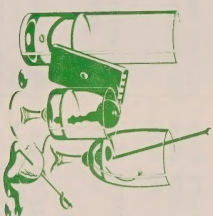
The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Ostris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT--DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3911 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

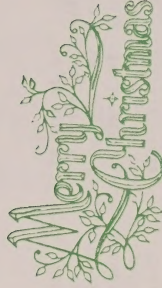
1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.

5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you're  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Biloxi.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID: December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBKE (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

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10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

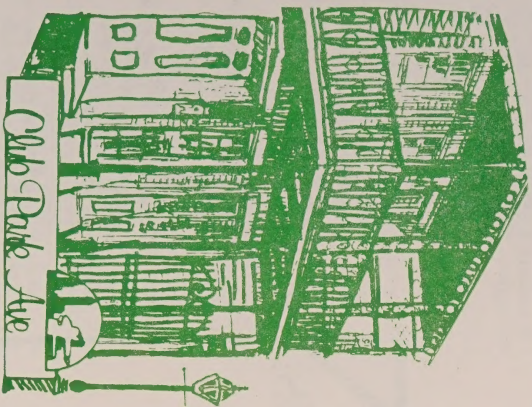
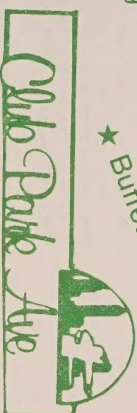


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... Miss Toni Denise from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

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Finest Gay Entertainment Complex  
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high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need.  
Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.  
How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.  
How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.  
Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. . COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.

7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover

8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament

CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament

15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHOP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant

16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament

17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament

19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament

20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)

"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel"

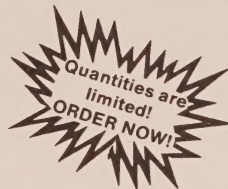
card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
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Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

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**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

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\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

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\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager  
SAFE TRIP  
MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart  
LOVE, LIBBY

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

JOY  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR  
-- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO LARRY

A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Other members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gray, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedos and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher'," and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armchairs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birchers on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

CORRAL



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Unfettering efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Garry, Larry, MCC, and Oafits.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

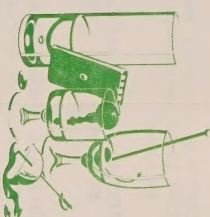
Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S -SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

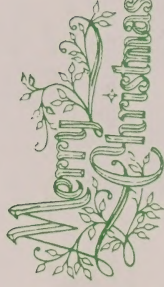
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

- ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
- SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SH W  
No cover.
- UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, you're  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reaching Miss Gay Biloxi.



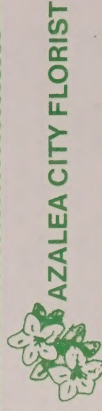
HAPPY BIRTHDAY  
DANN: December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBELI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PLUMBING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.  
DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
painting, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



AZALEA CITY FLORIST

"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"  
433-3038

George Coulter, owner  
NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME



TROOPERS

215 Conti Street • 438-9139



10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

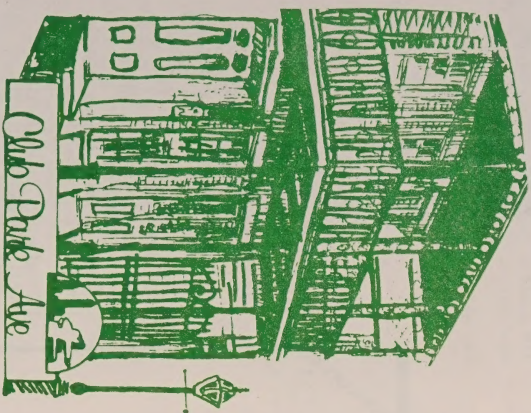
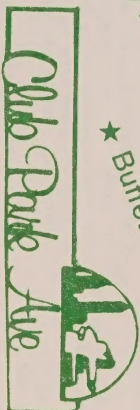


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



(205) 433-9105 (904) 599-9143  
7 S. Joachim St. 115 E. Park Ave.  
Mobile, AL Tallahassee, FL

The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex,  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

We at MOC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:  
"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.

How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could learn on.

Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CFA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
1p 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

**13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175**

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH - 7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORKSHOP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
"Don we now  
our  
Gay apparel!"

card printed on white with red & black,  
approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
send unique cards  
to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
10 cards..... 7.00\*  
25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

-----  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**For quicker handling, please enclose  
money order or cashier's check.  
Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
until your check clears.**

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JOHN AND THE  
EMPLOYEES AT THE CORRAL  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

TO MICHAEL  
Thanks for the Special Feelings  
MERRY CHRISTMAS - RON

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATION  
KEN JONES

PEACE ON EARTH

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

JOYOUS NOEL

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARCE AND SHIRLEY

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO LYDIA  
With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY



Merry Christmas

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

JOY  
TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year  
LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

GREETINGS

TO DON  
Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNK  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

HA! FLUJAH

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral



476-9142

Gay  
Help-line



We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality; Rules, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

- December 4: Those who have been "Voices crying in your wilderness."  
The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need.  
Those who have comforted you in times of distress.
- December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?  
What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.  
The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.
- December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.  
In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith.  
How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith.  
How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchiness" stand in the way of your faith.
- December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on.  
Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. . COME AND ENJOY.



## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "Peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it!" This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny

TROOPERS Check with them for  
CORRAL their special plans  
ESQUIRE for New Year's



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
**Esquire House**

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - 2:00 am  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW  
no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
no cover
- 8 UNTARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
CAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City  
Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sick-  
ness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover



Obviously you know nothing about MCC or Mobile. We are not preached to about the evils of drink. Drinking in itself is not a sin, is not evil. Alcoholism has been determined to be an illness. Try your local Baptist, Holiness, or Church of God etc., if you wish to discuss the evils of drink. There is a sin committed though, I'll get to it before I finish this. Our small group of vessel-serving Christians ask little or nothing from this community. We support the newsletter [the ads sold never fully cover the cost of printing and mailing]. Our small group supports and staffs the GAY HELP LINE (and I might add, we tell all newcomers to Mobile about the bars before we tell them of the church activities.) We are the BUDDIES of People with AIDS, with only TWO volunteers from the entire community that are non-church. Shall I continue??? SELF-SERVING????? Perhaps I don't understand the definition of the word.

Perhaps a few people sharing this fact with me sheds more light on this entire matter: The fact was that many of you out there thought that we were referring to a sexual practice when we spoke of Buddy liking Greek. Please reread your newsletter. I hardly think that a prerequisite for some sexual practices is the ability to speak Greek as well as a fascination with Greek culture. If so, some of our community needs to enroll in our schools of higher education as soon as the next term begins. If you had difficulty understanding that portion of the article because of your different mindset, why not with all of it?

We have been asked not to let this matter divide the community. It was suggested that the church boycotted The Gay Pride activities. [The Gay Pride Posters were printed as "GAY PRIDE WEEK OF PARTIES". We prefer to use the word ACTIVITIES since that poster also, by day of the week, listed the AIDS PRAYER VIGIL, AND THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SERVICE.] WE, the church, were at all the activities we could attend that did not conflict with our long-standing activities. Amazing how few of NONE we saw at the NON-PARTY activities. Another quote "A lot of us aren't into church. We just aren't into religion." By the same token, people, a lot of us aren't into BARS, but you always find us there when there is a worthwhile cause going on. At Buddy's Memorial Saturday at the Esquire House if it had not been for "church" people there would have been less than ten people in attendance.

I wish, again, that you had checked your facts about MCC. We have nothing to be self-righteous about on this earth. Check with some of the other churches. We do have something to feel very worried about in our mission as a church. We failed to recognize a brother in need and did nothing until it was too late. Study after study in our community relates the high death rate by alcohol, 25-35%, far more than AIDS claims each year. We do have a responsibility to each other, to care for each other. Whether you are a Christian, a Jew, an Agnostic, an Atheist, whatever, this I believe to be the basic moral and ethical charge to every human being.

If Buddy was the person I found him to be and the person you also speak of, I don't think he would be the least bit offended if his passing made life more livable for those who are to follow. Whether we wish to face the things that destroy us and keep us at the mercy of the straight world is an individual choice. However, it is the goal and mission of ALL MCC's to seek justice for all people. That includes facing head-on the things that cripple and destroy us.

CHECK IT OUT: NEWSWEEK POLL RE THE SUPREME COURT DECISION July 14th issue. This poll discovered that only 73% of the people polled knew about the decision, 47% disapproved of the decision regarding homosexuals, 41% approved; 42% felt that state laws regarding heterosexual sex would be illegal (33% felt they would be legal); 57% felt there should be no laws regarding consenting homosexual adults, 34% felt there should be; 74% felt there should be no laws regarding consenting heterosexual sex, 18% felt there should be; 29% said they had homosexual friends, 67% did not; and acceptance of homosexuality as an alternate lifestyle has less approval this year than it did in 1982, possibly as a result of the AIDS scare.

BOARD MEET

BOARD MEETING REPORT 7/6/86  
The Board was approached by a member asking for time to speak in favor to the Pastor's sermon addressing the respective Supreme Court decision concerning gay's sodomy laws. (See article in the Supreme Court decision elsewhere in this newsletter.) The Board has agreed that the member will have that time on 7/13 following the singing service, and the Board will be the following his presentation for questions and the sermon time was affirmed by the Pastor to address concerns which affect the Gay Community, and to educate, invite awareness, and remind us of our responsibilities as part of her task. Also, they affirmed that social justice, Christian social action, and issues of equity and inequity are appropriate topics for the pastor to address in the worship service.

OTHER BOARD DECISIONS  
Board job descriptions for all Board members will be made available to the Board members and congregation.

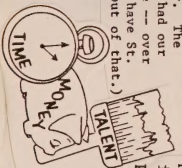
Board members will be asked to seek out one church member to assist them in their tasks, thus providing growth in leadership and beginning committee structures for the church. Letters are being sent to those who have declined or attended the church seeking to discover why they have not returned, and also letters will be sent to all visitors thanking them for attending. Active and inactive members of the church will be prepared by the Clerk and the Pastor.

Fall programming was discussed, including a Tea Dance or Social to open the Fall season; trips to Montgomery for the Shakespeare theater fund raising activities for the summer and fall were discussed. The treasurer asked for fund raising ideas, since our current bank balance, having paid our bills, is reasonably low.

The status of the Fun in the Sun weekend was discussed, about 15 MCCers are coming in for that weekend. A monthly potluck dinner was suggested, then changed to quarterly potluck, since most of our members are busy and scheduling conflicts conveniently occur. (Someone made the suggestion that we bring a dish and a article.)

A church plant sale (see article on roofing) was suggested, with members reminded to start their roofing now.

A monthly Trivial Pursuit game, with competitive desert making -- for a small donation -- was suggested as a fund raiser and passed. People will be asked to remember the coffee fund (after service refreshments), since it also provides birthday cakes, etc.  
A pledge drive in the Fall will be undertaken, so that we will have a better idea of finances and pledges we can count on monthly. The Treasurer also reminded us that we had our highest month's income ever in June -- over \$1,000. (But remember, we paid to have St. Peter's air conditioning repaired out of that.)



FROM THE PASTOR

Our last newsletter seemed to have run afoul of what one MCCer has termed "the back to Egypt" mentality (loving our oppression to so well that we keep wanting to go back to it.) How dare we in MCC talk about freedom; freeing ourselves from ghettoization, freeing ourselves from mind and body destroying chemicals, freeing ourselves from the "let others do it while we wait and see if it's going to succeed" mentality.

Sure, we're going to tread on someone's toes once in a while (and this issue may tread on a whole lot of them -- but we intended it that way). The prophetic stance has a way of finding feet standing in the way, and if Christians do not take a prophetic stance, we have not lived out our calling. Or did the community not expect us to speak as Christians. If not, we gave you the wrong impression and we're trying to correct that now.

Let me explain where I am coming from (as two others have done in the newsletter elsewhere).

My name is Marge Ragona, and I'm an alcoholic. (Hi, Marge!)  
In 1942, age 13, (I didn't know she was that old!) I began "social" drinking. We would hang out in the park and pass a bottle of cheap port or sherry (the best we could afford when we had pooled our nickels and dimes) and we would pick the world apart and put it back together. By the time I was 16, I was hanging out in gay bars in Greenwich Village, New York and spending most of my "allowance" for beer (then 10¢ a glass). I was a student and supported by family handouts at the time. At 18, I was drunk from Friday to Sunday every weekend, and by the time I was 25, I was a destructive, nearly daily drinker and remained a compulsive drinker and alcoholic until I was 32. I drank much too much, lost a number of very good jobs for absenteeism, messed up some important relationships with my drinking and stopped my own growth as a good gay person because every time I felt pain (and in the 40s and 50s there was a lot of pain associated with being gay, even in New York) or got scared of who and what I was I retreated to my friend, my bottle.

God, in a powerful moment in my life, ended my years as an alcoholic, moved me emotionally to the place where I didn't need to or want to drink -- and led me to acceptance of myself as a gay person, a Christian, and a "called" person -- called, that is, to ministry.

In the course of that ministry, at the end of May, I was asked to visit Buddy in the hospital. He was obviously dying, was golden yellow with jaundice because his liver had failed through alcoholic hepatitis, he was intubated and bleeding through the tube, was semi-comatose because his brain was failing, and he could live only a few more days. "There, I thought, 'but for the grace of God, I could be lying.'" So many of my friends, my age peers, my companions on the journey have died of alcoholism and here was another good gay person ending his life in medical alcoholism, depression, and in this case, coupled with grief and loneliness -- and I became angry. I was angry with myself for failing to recognize his need, with the community for not calling the church's attention to his desperation, and with all of us for not recognizing that our gay brother was in pain and trying to die; and like the folks in the parable, "We looked, and passed by on the other side of the road."

Help Others



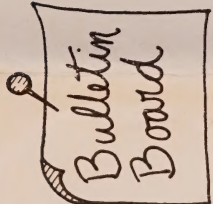
Is this empty fundamentalism, as your petition avers. No, I don't think so. One of our church members said that the main problem was that in the South you never tell people they are drinking too much, it's poor form and very bad manners. Well, that segment of my etiquette training was overlooked. All I knew was that one more person in our community was succumbing (had succumbed) to a preventable disease and he could be me or any one of us who are medical alcoholics. Far more says die of alcohol-related diseases than they do of AIDS.

I don't like the part of my calling that carries me to morgues and undertaking establishments, particularly when it's preventable. I don't mind burying folks who have lived long, productive lives, but I hate like HELL to bury 40 year old brothers or sisters when we, as a community, could have held out hope. And there is hope for medical alcoholics. I believe in miracles, I am one. I'm an alcoholic who has been basically dry since 1965 (sure I've had some slips, but I learned long ago to live in day-tight compartments, and to let yesterday be yesterday and to begin each day afresh.) Recognize that I am making a distinction between medical alcoholics, people who cannot drink alcohol and live, and folks who don't have a problem with it. Alcoholics Anonymous says, "Some of us must die that others may live," and holds out that when an alcoholic dies, very often it wakes others up to the fact that they, too, are in danger of finding death at the bottom of the bottle. Buddy, for me, is a reminder (as if I needed another one!) in death that those of us who have a drinking problem have some choices in front of us. God, speaking in the book of Deuteronomy, says to the Hebrew children wandering in the desert, "Look, this day I hold out to you life and death; choose life." For those who have no problem, there is no condemnation -- we don't condemn people who have a sickness. But we do remind you that we are offered life and death, and for people who are sick with alcoholism there really isn't anything in between -- and having seen Buddy, the death isn't a pretty one.

Jesus healed a man of a demon, and the man's friends spoke of him as "healed, clothed and in his right mind." There's the difference. For many of us, sobriety leaves us healed, clothed, and in our right minds, often for the first time in years. Possibly a Gay AA is an idea whose time has come, and maybe even a necessity in our community. (Boston has one that has over 200 members.) AA and sobriety need not be a threat to those who are well, but it can save from death those who are alcohol dependent. And to those people, the offer is made, "Choose life." (Anyone interested in Gay AA, call 476-9142 and ask to speak to me. There are others who belong to the church who are AA members, we're ready to begin a Gay AA chapter here in Mobile. Join us.)

#### NINE SIGNS OF ALCOHOLISM

1. Increase in alcohol tolerance.  
"I can drink them all under the table."
  2. Occasional or partial memory lapses.  
"Did I really do that last night?"
  3. Drinking beyond one's intentions.  
"Boy, did I get smashed! Should have eaten something."
  4. Increased dependence on alcohol.  
"Can't wait...Gotta have a quickie."
  5. Sneaking drinks.  
"Needed that extra one. Who'll know?"
  6. Preoccupation with alcohol.  
"Flection Day tomorrow...better pick up a bottle."
  7. Resentment when one's drinking is mentioned.  
"It's none of their business...I can handle it."
  8. Gulping drinks.  
"Gulp...ah! I needed that."
  9. Rationalizing loss of control.  
"If they had my problems, they'd drink too."
- IF YOU HAVE ONE OR MORE OF THESE, YOU MAY HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM AND SHOULD SEEK GUIDANCE.



#### MOBILE GAY AND LESBIAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

AWARDS TO MCC were presented to us from the awards for participation in 1985 in Gay Pride Week, the other to Rev. Marge Ragone, the female gay Community Service Award recipient. A similar award went to Jim B of the Mobile AIDS Fund for his involvement and service to the community. The third award went to our intrepid organist at the annual valuable male volleyball player at the Gay Pride Games. We thank MGCC for these awards, and pledge our continued service to the community.

#### HOW TO ROOT A PLANT

Ken, who raises roses and other flowers and plants, suggests the following: Take a 3 liter soft drink bottle and cut it in half. Put a 3" layer of Perlite in the bottom half, take cuttings of your favorite plants and place them in the Perlite, bottom down, and water. Then tape the top of the bottle back and place the jarred cuttings in your yard where they will receive filtered sunlight (like behind other plants). Shortly they will send out roots; when they have rooted well, transfer the plants to a pot with good potting soil, and donate to the church for the plant sale. It's easy, it works. Thanks, Ken.



#### TOUGH LOVE - TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

Tough Love is defined as caring enough about a person to tell them exactly what you see or feel, rather than telling them what they want to hear.

An example of tough love is a surgeon who is about to operate on a person with a burst appendix. The surgeon realizes that he is about to take a savage, cruel action by cutting into the patient's body. He realizes that pain is going to be inflicted on that person. However, he also knows that if he is not willing to perform the surgery, the patient will probably die.

If we seem so shockingly blatant when talking about alcoholism and dying, it is because we know that we are dealing with a disease that is a killer, and that if problem drinkers don't change, the disease can only end in death. Therefore, we care enough to risk speaking frankly and honestly. Tough love is not an excuse to hurt someone, it is only caring enough to help them learn how they are hurting themselves. Tough love is essential for reaching those who need help even though they do not realize that need. In Matthew 22, Jesus gave us two commandments that cover it all: The first is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and body; and the second is to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Contrary to popular belief, love is not always conveyed through sex. This second commandment means to love your neighbor to the point that if s/he hurts, you hurt; if s/he is sad, you are sad; if s/he is happy, you are happy; if s/he is dying, a part of you is dying, too.

So if we seem self-righteous and insensitive that is not our intent. We are, to the best of our ability, trying to follow Jesus' command to love our neighbor enough to tell it like it is. To conform to popularity would not only go against our character but also against our beliefs. Jesus told us in Matthew 25 that the "sheep shall be separated from the goats...for I was hungry and you gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take me in; naked and you did not clothe me; sick and in prison and you did not visit me." We do not want to be classified as the stubborn goats. So we stand proudly and state clearly that we care because God cared enough for us to sacrifice Jesus for our sakes. In the light of that kind of caring, we return, through our lives, a response to God's caring and live out compassion for Jesus' sake.

#### FROM THE EDITOR - II

The telephone rings often, more and more people continue to drop by and the petition is explained by yet another. Perhaps we did not know Buddy as well as some of you did. We DID know him and we liked him. We loved him as Christians, a type of love some of you may not understand.

You stated we didn't know of his gallant fight to live, that our statement was a "pathetic little self-serving parable on the evils of drink". First, to the writer of the petition, please check your dictionary for the definition of a parable and you will discover that there is no parable in the report on Buddy's death. Second, we have on file quotes from responsible people who undoubtedly shared thoughts and feelings with Buddy that you were not privileged to share. I'm fairly certain that the things he and I discussed were not part of his every day dialogue with most of the people he knew either. If we had no quotes from anyone, if we had had no consultations with his doctor and nurses, the fact still remains that Buddy was only forty years old. His death was from the alcoholic liver failure [not from AIDS as rumored around parts of the community]. The average life span of an American white male is now 73 years. We are also aware of his request for a "NO CODE" weeks prior to his death.





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

(205) 476-9142

Pastor

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Other members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N' Gay, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N' G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N' G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N' G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedo and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a gay person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armoirs and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birchers on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay -- parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

MISS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A.M. - 2 A.M.  
FRI. - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS

CORRAL



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maldenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Misy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black Church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

Equire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

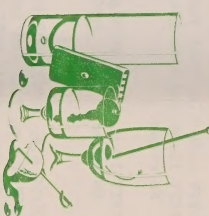
Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28



DRINK AND DRIVE

PLEASE DON'T





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

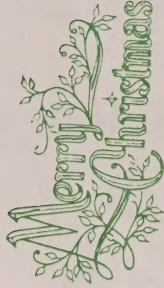
Mobile, AL • 473-5985



- 22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW
- 23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE  
SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERV  
T
- 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S
- 26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.
- 29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP
- 30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
- 31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

## JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

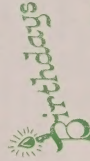
- 1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard
2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament
3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHW  
No cover.
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, your 4th  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reverend Miss Gay Biloil.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN: --  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
TAMBEKI (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PAINTING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.  
DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
painting, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



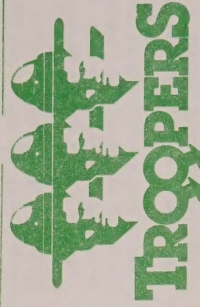
## AZALEA CITY FLORIST

"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"

433-3038

George Coulter, owner

NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME



215 Conti Street • 438-9139



10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years

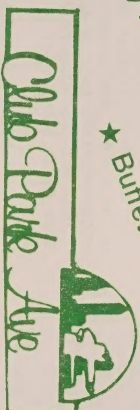


# NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY!

Celebrate the 3rd Anniversary of our disco with a Theme Party - 1985 Top 20 Hits Countdown by Bunny Hopson  
At 11 pm we present a very special show with a very special guest... **Miss Toni Denise** from our mother club in Tallahassee.

- ★ Champagne
- ★ Party Favors
- ★ Buffet

DISCO NOW OPEN 7 NIGHTS A WEEK  
7 S. Joachim • 433-9105



(205) 433-9105 (904) 599-9143  
7 S. Joachim St. 115 E. Park Ave.  
Mobile, AL Tallahassee, FL

The Gulf Coast's  
Finest Gay Entertainment Complex,  
Presenting the South's finest in  
high energy entertainment and  
dance music  
Featuring a Piano Bar, Game Room,  
Restaurant Disco and Courtyard

## SPECIAL ADVENT RAP SERIES

We at MCC have been holding a rap series that has kept a lot of people's interest as we have talked about being gay, "Homosexuality: Roles, Roles and Relationships," has been the title of the series. People have come and have enjoyed and grown. Now for Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, we have a little something different in mind.

Back in 1944, a Jesuit priest, Father Delp was arrested just at the beginning of Advent. The Nazi war machine was about to be defeated but Hitler would not face the coming defeat. Father Delp had joined the Kreisau Circle, an anti-Nazi group that was planning the new Germany that would have to be rebuilt after the war -- planning it on Christian lines. Father Delp was betrayed, arrested and tried in a trial that was a mockery. His only crime, that of being a Christian.

Father Delp condemned those of the religious community who had followed the Nazis with these words:

"The most pious prayer can become a blasphemy if the one who offers it tolerates or helps to further conditions which are fatal to humanity, which render us unacceptable to God, or weaken our spiritual, moral, or religious sense."

Father Delp discovered, during that Advent of 1944, that in the very midst of his desolation, the messengers of God were present -- and were pure gifts from God, which never could have been anticipated, never foreseen, never planned by human consciousness. In the darkness of his defeat and degradation, the seeds of light and hope were being sown. In his Advent meditations, using the traditional Christmas themes and figures, he describes in the ruin of the society around him an "advent" in which the messengers of God are preparing for the future. "Unless we have been shocked to the depths by ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot understand the full import of Advent." He cries out for Christian liberty and personal dignity -- and yet liberation from fixation on our own subjective needs and compulsions -- recognizing that we cannot fully become persons until we understand our need for community and our duty of serving others.

Based on his Advent meditations, we will be rapping about the people who have been important in our lives and the places we need to go to be whole people.

December 4: Those who have been "voices crying in your wilderness."

The "Herald Angels" who have come to you in your time of need. Those who have comforted you in times of distress.

December 11: Where have you been obedient/needed to be obedient but have rejected it?

What is standing in the way of your being a whole person.

The "Glad Tidings" of God's presence in your life.

December 18: How does "power over" control your life and keep you from being what God wants you to be.

In what ways do belongings or search for money keep you from being a whole person and/or living out your faith. How does what you have learned stand in the way of your faith. How does "ritual," "rite" or "churchness" stand in the way of your faith.

December 30: How has God's presence been shown to you as something you could lean on. Out of some difficulty you could be experiencing, how could God be speaking to you.

ALL RAPS ARE AT 7:30, REFRESHMENTS, AND GOOD COMPANIONS. COME AND ENJOY.



# ...from the pastor

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keep watch over their flocks by night..."

So the old story begins, telling us of the night of the Christ Child's birth, with the mystical sense that all old stories have, recapturing time gone by but always remembered.

As a child I saw the shepherds of the holy land in the same way that I had seen shepherds on Christmas cards or in picture books, tall and lean, long-robed and very quiet, watching calmly as the sheep slept, all-knowing and wakeful.

It came as a great shock to me that while that picture of shepherds was to some extent the Old Testament view of shepherds, and certainly Jesus was spoken of as the "Good Shepherd," by the time of the New Testament shepherds had about the same reputation that the cattle drovers had in the days of the settling of the Old West. Shepherds were dirty, they smelled -- they were even considered ritually unclean because the could not wash or observe the rites of purification before meals that all Jews performed at the time of Jesus. Shepherds were despised by the orthodox people of their day -- the flocks made too many demands on them for them to always observe the niceties of ceremonial law. Even the shepherds who kept the special Temple flocks -- the sheep that were unblemished and used only for temple sacrifice, and which were pastured near Bethlehem -- were considered unclean.

Yet it was to these ritually impure shepherds that God announced the birth of the Holy One. God has a sense of the ironic, possibly even a sense of humor. Isn't it surprising that Luke's vision of angels announcing the birth of Jesus comes to shepherds, those whom the religious people of the day would certainly not have allowed in their homes, would never have touched, and even when the shepherds passed through town would go indoors so they would not be contaminated by them. God did not even blink at the thought of making the announcement of salvation's coming to those from whom the townspeople fled, lest they be defiled.

While the rabbis of the day regarded the shepherds with suspicion, at the same time shepherding had its dignity and even its theology. David had been a shepherd and so had Moses when God appeared to him. God was spoken of as the shepherd of the people. Shepherds (as good rulers) were to oversee God's poor people, in whom God had a particular interest.

We believe that the shepherds had a readiness to accept miracles, a genuine inner prompting which overshadowed what they thought they knew. They were ready to place their confidence in the inner relationship which they had with God -- their yearning met the promises of God with hope. They listened to the words of God's messengers and believed. They were people whose hearts remembered the old promises of deliverance and liberation who heard the angels' song of "peace on earth to those of goodwill," and responded with purity of heart, with lively wakefulness of soul. It did not matter to them what the world thought of them, they thought well of God. Their lives were lived in desire and expectation and they longed for the fulfillment of the promises they remembered and implicitly believed.

For those of us whom society would like to banish beyond its sight, so that it would not have to deal with us, the shepherds are a reminder. On that night so long ago, God chose the shepherds to receive the announcement of the birth of the Christ Child, not the rabbis -- not the religious establishment. Whatever God's reason, God knew that the shepherds would react with love and wonder and would come hastily to see the Child. You come, too, and join the shepherds and God's unworthy chosen and behold the miraculous birth of humanity's liberator.

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR HR #230

I have an aunt who has a phrase she is fond of quoting to anyone who complains but does not act. "Get up off your apathy and do something about it." This seems to sum up any number of instances when we fail to take action in our lives. Especially those things that should be of importance to us.

Too many of us are guilty of complaining about our rights (or lack thereof) as gay people. Unfortunately, even more of us don't complain. We take what comes to us, happy to have what little liberty we do have. We are guilty of not getting involved, afraid that we can do nothing or that our singular actions will not amount to anything. It's too easy to stay in our closets and not exercise any of our rights as citizens of this country.

There is currently in Congress a bill sponsored by U. S. Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) and Rep. Gus Hawkins (D-Cal). This bill, HR #230 is an important piece of legislation for the gay community. It is being lobbied for by several gay rights groups, but more important, it is being lobbied against by the Christian Right. Our archenemy, Jerry Falwell, has organized a huge hate mail campaign against this legislation.

Lobbying for or against HR #230 is not enough. The sponsors of this bill need to know of our support for their endeavors. Our own congressional representatives need to know how we, their constituency, feel about the issue. It does not take long to write a letter expressing your support for HR #230. In other words, get up off your apathy and do something.

You can write to your congressional representatives at the following addresses:

Senator Howell Heflin  
6327 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Jeremiah Denton  
110 Russell State Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Representative W.L. (Sonny) Callahan  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## NEW YEAR'S EVE ACTIVITIES

DAVID'S - New Year's Eve Party  
Free champagne and party favors  
Special guest - Carmen Del Rio  
(Also appearing, Jan 1, Jan 3 & 4)

SOCIETY - New Year's Eve Party  
Special Show - \$2.00 cover  
Free champagne (all you can drink)  
Hats, horns, etc.

CLUB PARK AVENUE - New Year's Eve  
Special show with special guest  
Toni Denise from CPA Tallahassee.  
Champagne, party favors, buffet.  
Top 20 Count Down in the Disco by Bunny.

TROOPERS - Check with them for  
CORRAL - their special plans  
ESQUIRE - for New Year's



## HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

from the  
Esquire House

13 S. Joachim St.  
433-9175

Mon-Fri 9:30 am - till  
Saturday 9:30 am - 2:00 am

## DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 6 SOCIETY - 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight-SHOW no cover.
- 7 SOCIETY - 10p.m. and midnight - SHOW no cover
- 8 UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALISTS - 10:30 am  
GAY 'N GRAY - 2 p.m.  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH -7pm  
REGULAR SUNDAY WORKSHOP
- 9 ESQUIRE - 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL - 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 10 UU 7:30pm "Men's Lives, Men's Issues"  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 11 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard
- 12 ESQUIRE 8 p.m.- Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 13 SOCIETY 8 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 15 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
DAVID'S - Miss Gay Emerald City Pageant  
CPA - First Annual Sisters of Sickness AIDS Benefit Pageant
- 16 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 - Shuffleboard Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 17 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament
- 18 MCC ADVENT RAP - 7:30 p.m.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament
- 19 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. - Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9 p.m.- Pool Tournament
- 20 SOCIETY 8 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover
- 21 CPA - Neil's "Best Little Whorehouse"  
SOCIETY 10 p.m. CHRISTMAS SHOW  
No cover

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
 "Don we now  
 our  
 Gay apparel!"

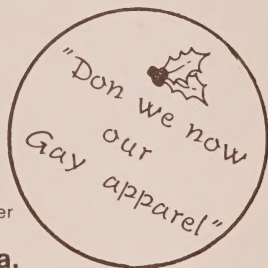
card printed on white with red & black,  
 approximately 6¼" x 4½" with green envelope

This year...  
 send unique cards  
 to your festive friends.

Package of 5 cards .....\$ 4.00\*  
 10 cards..... 7.00\*  
 25 cards..... 15.00\*

\*Plus Postage and Handling

LARGER QUANTITIES AVAILABLE  
 WRITE FOR PRICES



2¼" diameter  
 Button

**\$1.00 ea.**

-----  
**PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY - MINIMUM ORDER \$4.00**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For quicker handling, please enclose  
 money order or cashier's check.  
 Personal check orders cannot be mailed  
 until your check clears.

Number of cards ordered \_\_\_\_\_

Number of buttons ordered \_\_\_\_\_

**\*POSTAGE & HANDLING...**

if order is \$4.00 add 75¢

\$5.00 - \$10.00, add \$1.50

\$11.00 - \$19.00, add \$2.00

\$20.00 - \$30.00, add \$3.00

For larger orders, please write or call

Sub Total \_\_\_\_\_

\*Add Postage & Handling \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail Order To:** B. Hire P.O. Box 160123 Mobile, AL 36616









MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS  
To The Club Park Avenue Employees  
Jim Criss, Manager

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NEIL, BUDDY AND THE  
OWNERS AT TROOPERS THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NOW AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO CLUB PARK AVENUE,  
JIM, JIM, AND ALL EMPLOYEES  
THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS TO YOU ALL AND THANK  
YOU FOR ALL YOUR SUPPORT OF MCC  
MARGE AND SHIRLEY

TO LYDIA With all my heart LOVE, LIBBY  
Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas

TO JIM - Happy Birthday/Merry Christmas  
and Happy New Year LOVE JIM

MAY EVERYONE FIND PEACE, HOPE, AND  
HAPPINESS DURING THE HOLIDAY AND THE  
NEW YEAR -- EDDIE F.

TO DON Merry Christmas with all my love  
PATRICK

TO THE COMMUNITY  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From the Gang at the Corral

TO BOB - MERRY CHRISTMAS  
SAFE TRIP

MUCH LOVE - MICHAEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR  
FROM ALL THE FOLKS AT MCC  
GOD BLESS YOU, EVERYONE!

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO HARRY AND THE ALABAMA  
FORUM -- THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

MERRY CHRISTMAS  
Lisa, Greg, Eddie, and May  
I LOVE YOU! - Me.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO KATHERINE & JIMMY RAY  
On their new arrival: Jessica Rae  
From John

GREETINGS, SALUTATIONS, FELICITATIONS  
KEN JONES

JOYOUS NOEL

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO MCC AND THANK YOU FOR  
ALL YOUR SUPPORT THE ESQUIRE HOUSE

TO CORRAL EMPLOYEES  
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
From John and Robert

HALLELUJAH

THE BEST OF FUN TO MOBILE AND  
VISITORS DURING THE HOLIDAYS  
Smiles and Colors - Queen Richard

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL MY DRUNKEN  
CUSTOMERS  
Love, Emily Turner

TO CPA STAFF AND CUSTOMERS  
Happy Holidays  
From Jim, Harry, and David

TO LARRY  
A cuddly Christmas and a Lively  
New Year - John

476-9142

Gay

Help-line





# The Metropolitan Community Church

AT MOBILE

4500 BIT AND SPUR ROAD

MOBILE, ALABAMA 36608

Rev. MARGE RAGONA

Pastor

(205) 476-9142

## NEWSLETTER

### A CHRISTMAS WISH

It has been said that there are six kinds of peace, and that a person who is blessed with all of these will never want for anything else -- neither for health nor wealth, for love, for happiness, for beauty.

The six kinds of peace are:

1. The peace that comes from good will among nations.
2. The peace that results when good neighbors help each other.
3. The peace that is drawn from nature.
4. The peace that exists within the family.
5. The peace that is found in worship of God; and finally,
6. The peace that is found within the self.

To all of you -- may such peace be yours throughout the Christmas Season, with an added measure of joy to make the New Year the brightest and most fulfilling ever.

## PEACE ON EARTH

*a Christmas Dream*



# FROM THE EDITOR--

It's amazing how complicated we human beings have made our lives through the centuries. What better time than the Christmas season is there to take stock of our lives, our goals, our dreams, our commitments. To me, the story of Christ's coming tells us one thing, WE ARE PUT ON THIS EARTH TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER. There is no justification that I can find in any teachings, Christian or other, that is founded on injustice, hatred, bigotry. Yet, somehow we humans manage to fill our lives with so many unpleasant, wasteful, unhealthy thoughts and feelings. Of course we have our ups and downs -- but they are balanced by so many good feelings. Some of us, however, never get away from the DOWNS. We wallow around in our mazes and hazes of nothingness, hating ourselves and alienating others. But it's so simple. Love. Start loving yourself just a little bit more. Then progress to loving your family, your friends, even your lover. Give just a small amount more than you have been giving, including to yourself. Take the time to take stock of what you really want out of life. Most of us, when it comes to the bottom line, really want to love and be loved. Christ's birth reminds us that "Love was born at Christmas, love all lovely, love divine," in the words of the Christmas carol. Look past your Christmas tree. Look into the eyes and the hearts of those around you. Love is there. Remember that

"LOVE REQUIRES SHARING,  
SHARING REQUIRES STRUGGLE,  
STRUGGLE REQUIRES FAITH,  
FAITH REQUIRES LOVE."

Merry Christmas to you all.

## TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

MCC folk will be celebrating Christmas in an age-old way -- we will have some activity for each of the 12 days of Christmas, beginning on the 24th, with a special Christmas Eve service (11 p.m.) at the church. Then there will be open house, wassail parties, movies and popcorn, and all sorts of things happening. The schedule so far looks like this:

- December 25th - Open House at Marge and Shirley's.
- December 26th - Party at Ken and Ed's
- December 27th - Christmas caroling at the Church (Judson, John and Mike)
- December 28th - Gathering at Tom and Dean's
- December 29th - Dicken's Christmas at Joe's
- December 30th - Christmas Rap at the pastor's
- January 3rd - Gathering with Pat and Vivian
- January 4th - Party with Ron, Mike and Tony

Other members and friends are invited to fill in the empty evenings in between.

## CHRISTMAS CAROLING

You get street preachers every weekend, but this time you're going to get street singers! MCC congregation members will be singing carols on your favorite corners downtown on Monday, December 23rd. Bring your voices and join us in joyful music of the Christmas season. We will be having fun. Come along and enjoy the evening with us.

## OLDER GAYS GROUP NEWS

The SOOM group (Silver Owls of Mobile) met to change its name to Gay 'N Gray, and to set its organizational meeting for Sunday, December 8th at 2 p.m. Persons 40 and over who are interested in joining should call the Gay Help Line at 476-9142 or John at 342-7891.

G 'N G is being organized to provide social outlets for older people in the community who need support and opportunities to meet other people. "Too many older gays sit at home and do nothing, because they feel there is no place to go and there is no one who is interested in them," said John, who is spearheading the group along with Patricia.

The group is open to anyone over 40 and to those younger who like the companionship of older people. The group will have potluck dinners, theater parties, trips and other outings. In addition, the group plans to create a telephone network with G 'N G members calling older people or people who are confined to their homes at least once a day. "This network will bring a sense of security to older people, and also help to dispel some of the loneliness of being away from others in the community," John said. "Older people are in danger of having accidents in their homes and not being found. Perhaps we can help them feel more secure."

G 'N G is also looking into affiliation with SAGE (Senior Action in a Gay Environment), a nationwide organization providing the same kinds of activities and supports for older gay people.

## NEWS FROM OSIRIS

The Order of Osiris moves on target to the celebration of its 5th Annual Mardi Gras ball, February 7th, 1986.

Attire for the ball is formal, tuxedo and tails of all colors are permitted. All gowns must be floor length.

Tickets are now on sale. Contact an Osiris member as soon as possible. Remember, they are in limited supply.

feminist," they said. "What would you do if we took away your 'Crusader Bunny' banner?" was their question to her. "I would go on doing exactly what I am doing now, and accept the title Jesus took that of 'Teacher', and feel honored to do so," was her reply. Marge was licensed in 1975 and ordained in 1977 at Denver, Colorado with a number of other fairly controversial MCC ministers.

After ministering in Providence, R.I., Marge went west to pastor at MCC Ventura, Calif. and to teach at Samaritan Theological Institute, MCC's lay and pastoral training center. She then returned to the Northeast as pastor at Boston, where she attended seminary at Boston University. As an "out" gay, she found other gays in the seminary and was able to be a speaker for gay issues in many of her classes, realizing that that position was both important and painful, in that others could not be open and many had to hide behind her. "Seminary was awful for me, because no matter what class I was in or what my need for being there was, I was first and foremost the MCC pastor, and I was seen primarily as a person, not just another Christian minister and student." She is enrolled now at Springhill, where she is in the Master of Theological Studies program. (The church, by the way, helps to pay her tuition there.)

Marge has been a major gay activist for nearly 11 years. She once led the New York Gay Pride Parade up Sixth Avenue with her then 11 year old daughter. She remembers the cries of "Off the sidewalk and into the streets," and "Out of your closets and into the streets." "We even called to the antique dealers along the way, 'Out of your armories and into the streets,'" she recalls, laughing. (Look it up, it's a fancy "closet." Ed.) In Boston, she appeared on television in a major program called "Gay Rights, Who's Right?" and on five programs opposite an opponent from the John Birch Society. During that time, her life was threatened by a caller who would telephone each morning at eight with the message, "We're going to get you," after she bested the John Birch on the Avi Nelson Show. A rock was thrown through Boston's Gay Community News window with a message that "We're going to get Joe Miller and Marge Ragona." Miller was then the head of Gay Legislation in Boston. Marge says, "I had to decide then what things I would be willing to die for, and prayed that Gay Liberation would be more than just the right to have sex in public places, but that there would be a serious commitment to bettering the lives of all gay people -- and, yes, that I would gladly die for -- since I had spent too many years closeted myself."

Marge is the founding pastor of MCC at Mobile, and is proud of the work MCC is doing here. "I love my church and I feel the love coming back to me from brothers and sisters who care about the church, care about each other, and care about the gay community in Mobile. There is so much we want to do, like getting in the Helpline going, forming an AIDS Support Group, and just being the church in this city. We need the support of all the gay community, and we will give back tenfold what we get -- that's the Christian way." She concludes, "My Christian beliefs are dear to me, and MCC has provided a place to be all I can be, gay parent, activist, Christian, and teacher -- who could want more out of life --

# SOCIETY

54 So. Conception  
433-9258

MSS BETTY - OWNER  
51 S. CONCEPTION ST.  
433-9141

Weekdays - Noon Till  
Weekends - 24 hours

SUN. - THURS. 10 A. M. - 2 A. M.  
FRI - SAT. OPEN 24 HOURS



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency, "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missy, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population. "Witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she gins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.

## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Equire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1090 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Equire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Equire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Equire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Equire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Neil, the cast and crew and everyone at the Equire House.

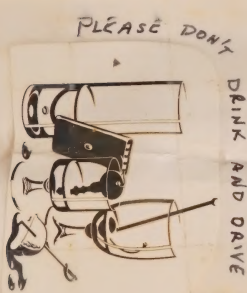
Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Lee, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Ostrife.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.  
Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28





# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

While the everyday pressures of a non-functioning heating system on the night of our first cold weather weigh upon us, I'll take the comforting flicker of this open fire to light up my report on the recent District Conference.

The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: Largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A streamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyal Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3211 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m.- Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING  
ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE  
ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS  
SERVICE.  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPECIAL  
SHOW

MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS  
DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffle-  
board Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARGE  
AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT  
TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
EVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

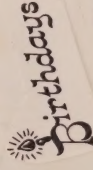
4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- For  
your 13th year of existence, your 9th  
as a Chartered Church.

SPECIAL NEWS  
CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
Reigning Miss Gay Biloxi.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANNI B. December 10th  
JIM G. December 15th  
DAVID H. December 29th  
LARRY H. January 3rd.

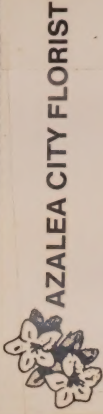
A VERY SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
VERY GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
LAMBERT (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
HUGS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOVER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARGE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

PLUMBING, INDOOR, REASONABLE RATES.  
Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
or Mondays. 476-5171, ask for Harry.

DOMESTIC ENGINEER - Cleaning, Interior  
painting, wallpaper. Organize your  
precious collectibles?? 476-9142, ask  
for Shirley.



AZALEA CITY FLORIST

"Say it with flowers, say it with ours"  
433-3038

George Coulter, owner  
NEW CUSTOMER CREDIT ALWAYS WELCOME!



215 Conti Street • 438-9139



10 Dec. '85  
3 Happy Years



# FROM THE DEACON'S BENCH

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The most notable aspect of the entire affair was conceived in the Mobile car as we were journeying across the I-65 Golden Arches Bridge (or at least somewhere along the way.) I refer to the change of the name of the District. We were formerly listed as the South Atlantic District or SAD for short. Hoping to do some consciousness-raising that the district extended to the Gulf, we put our heads together for a better name for the district and we are now, by formal adoption of the business session, GLAD, which stands for the Gulf-Lower Atlantic District. This change from SAD to GLAD was to electrify the remainder of the Conference. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the Sunday Morning service that was the climax of the Conference.

As your voting delegate, this was my second MCC Conference. My background includes many religious conferences and meetings, but I have never felt the awesome presence of the Holy Spirit more than in that concluding service. If you ever want to feel enveloped in the "Everlasting Arms" go to the nearest available MCC Conference! For GLAD people, this will probably be the first weekend in May, 1986. Mark your calendars and make your arrangements now, because this can be both a great spiritual event, and help your MCC at Mobile, win the attendance pennant. (Our delegation advanced another idea which seemed to fall on fertile ground, namely, that each member church will bring a banner representative of their congregation and their city. We will have a competition among these standards, along with the established attendance contest and pennants will be awarded signifying victory in the following categories: largest attendance from a single church; and largest percentage of congregation attending.) A steamer will be awarded to attach to the banner.

The business meeting went fairly smoothly, through adoption of a budget, regular business, and election of officers. Almost all of these were selected on the first ballots, including Mary Moore of Birmingham, District Coordinator for a full 4-year term, Rev. Bob Galloway (Knoxville), Assistant District Coordinator, Nancy Gunn (Greensboro, N.C.), District Clerk, T.J. Burnham (Nashville, Tenn.), District Treasurer, Loyd Charles (Atlanta, GA.), Lay Representative, and Rev. Janet Pierce (Nashville, Tenn.), Clergy Representative.

We have copies of the minutes available, so if you are interested in all the gory details, hail me down and ask.

The Old Deacon,  
Ken Jones.

We met at

OPEN DAILY NOON TO 6 A.M.

3911 Springhill Ave.

Mobile, AL • 473-5985

DANCE



22 UU 10:30 a.m. Sunday Service

SOCIETY 5 p.m. - Pool Tournament  
MCC 7 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
CPA - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW

23 MCC CHRISTMAS CAROLING

ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard  
Tournament  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

24 UU 5 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE

ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN 8 p.m. CHRISTMAS SERVICE.

ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Pool Tournament  
DAVID'S - CHRISTMAS PARTY AND SPE SHOW  
MCC 11:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

25 MERRY CHRISTMAS

DAVID'S - SPECIAL CHRISTMAS SHOW  
ESQUIRE 8 p.m. Dynasty and Shuffleboard Tournament  
MCC ALL DAY - OPEN HOUSE AT MARCE AND SHIRLEY'S

26 ESQUIRE 8 p.m. TRIVIA TOURNAMENT

TROOPERS 9 p.m. Pool Tournament

27 SOCIETY 8 p.m. Pool Tournament

29 UU 10:30 Sunday Service

MCC 7:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP

30 ESQUIRE 6:30 and 9:30 Shuffleboard

MCC 7:30 CHRISTMAS RAP  
CORRAL 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

31 SEE SPECIAL LISTINGS FOR NEW YEAR'S  
FIVE CELEBRATIONS

JANUARY 1, 1986 HAPPY NEW YEAR

1 ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Dynasty and  
Shuffleboard

2. ESQUIRE 8:00 p.m. Trivia Tournament  
TROOPERS 9:00 p.m. Pool Tournament

3. SOCIETY 8:00 p.m. Pool Tournament  
SOCIETY 10:00 and midnight - SHOW  
No cover.

4. SOCIETY 10 p.m. and midnight - SHW  
No cover.

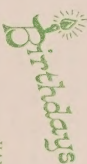
5. UU 10:00 a.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP  
SOCIETY 5 p.m. Pool Tournament  
MCC 7:00 p.m. SUNDAY WORSHIP



CONGRATULATIONS MCC NASHVILLE -- for  
your 13th year of existence, your faith  
as a Chartered Church.

## SPECIAL NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO FELICITY LANE, the  
winning Miss Gay Biloxy.



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

DANN -- December 10th  
JIM G. -- December 15th  
DAVID H. -- December 29th  
LARRY H. -- January 3rd.

SPECIAL HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO A  
TAYLOR GRAND LADY. MCC WISHES MRS. ETHEL  
TAMBLIN (OUR CHURCH MOTHER) A VERY  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16th. SHE  
WILL BE EIGHTY-ONE -- WE WISH HER 81  
BUCCS FROM US ALL.

ANOTHER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY WISH TO  
SHIRLEY -- JANUARY 5TH. VERY FEW  
PEOPLE HAVE THE GRACE TO BE THE LOWER  
TO AN MCC MINISTER -- SHIRLEY CARRIES  
IT WELL. ALL MY LOVE, MARCE.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

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Expert service. Call evenings after 6  
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10 Dec. '85

3 Happy Years



# PROFILE

Rev. Marge Ragona is a native of New York City. She is one of a long line of family members who are in ministry -- her father, an aunt (one of the early ordained Presbyterian ministers), a great uncle who was dean of Colgate Divinity School, and an ancestor, Timothy Flint, who was a missionary to the Indians in the Carolinas in the 1700's. Marge went to nursing school in order to become a medical missionary -- and it was there that she officially "came out." Fearing that exposure would mean certain expulsion from both nursing school and the mission field, she changed her career interests. After graduation from nursing school, she tried a career in advertising, writing copy for Revlon, Maidenform and 21 Brands for a major Madison Avenue advertising agency. "All advertising gave me was ulcers and a drinking problem," says Marge.

Still wanting to work in medicine, but not really wanting to be a nurse, Marge has for many years worked as medical research secretary, medical transcriptionist, editor and manuscript typist, working primarily in large research centers like Mt. Sinai, New York Medical College, and Beth Israel Hospital in New York and Boston.

Marge was one of the first gay-parents-by-choice -- she and a dear friend, a gay man who was severely ill, decided that there was really no reason gays could not be good parents and they would try to have at least one, if not two, children before he became so ill that he would require radiation treatments and preclude any further children. They have two sons, David and Jonathan. David lives in Pensacola and is waiter at Darryl's there. Jon is in his fifth year of a double major in Mathematics and computer science at Rhode Island College and will be entering Brown University for his masters next fall. Marge's second marriage, to a bisexual man, resulted in Missey, who is a member of the community and lives in Princeton, N.J. and belongs to MCC of Christ the Liberator there. One of the things Marge feels proudest of is her work in helping gay parents come out of the closet with the founding of the Lesbian Mother's Rap in New York. Her work led others to found Dykes and Tykes, a national organization for gays involved in child rearing, either as parents or the lovers of parents.

Marge graduated from Tulane University with a major in American Studies -- a valuable background, she feels, for a pastor. "Culture and economics have a great deal to do with what religious groups people belong to," she says, and MCC is not alone in ministering to a special segment of the population, "witness the Black church and its effect on society," she adds. Marge taught 5th grade in New Orleans for 8 years, took classes at seminary in New Orleans, and worked as a Sunday School Superintendent for a Baptist church there. She held membership in one of the most prestigious Southern Baptist churches in N.O., and highly prizes her transfer of membership from that church to MCC. ("Try and do that today," she grins.) As a teacher, she put her convictions to work and became one of the first white teachers in the then all-Black school system. "I felt God had called me to be in that place at that time, and I was certain it was part of God's plan for me to be there."

In 1973, Marge got involved with MCC in New York, becoming an "exhorter" or student minister. She attended seminary classes at New York Theological Seminary and at the Institute for Theology. She applied for licensing in MCC, but was turned down because of her activity as a feminist. "I was told it was not fully Christian to want to minister to gay women alone, that I must minister to men and women both, and I had a year to reorder my priorities. I don't think I will ever forget that -- and it still hurts for me and my sisters to have been considered too unimportant for a whole ministry designed just for them. MCC now has a number of churches with exactly that kind of ministry -- but then it was considered heresy." The next year she applied again, and the Credentials Committee interviewing her again brought up her feminism. "We hear you're a

## WRITERS' GROUP MEETS

The new writers' group in Mobile for gay/lesbian people and their friends met on November 29th to elect Natalie as the coordinator and to endorse the name for the group, Metropolitan Writers Guild.

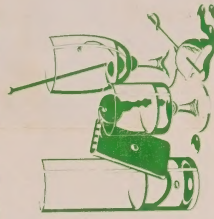
For the next meeting for the Guild interested persons should call the Gay Help Line, 476-9142 for location and other information.

The group set down two requirements for members: Each person will be asked to bring a piece of writing to read to the group and to participate in the critiquing of that piece. In addition, the group is asking each person to keep a log of his/her writing hours in order to help people build a routine of working which is essential to the successful writer.

The group plans to have several guest speakers during the 1986 year and to take one or two trips to explore literary points of interest along the Gulf Coast.



PLEASE DON'T  
DRINK AND DRIVE



## MOBILE GAY COMMUNITY RAISES MONEY TO FIGHT AIDS

The Esquire House Lounge, with the original Mobile cast of "The Rocky Horror Show," a stage version of the cult film, on November 26th helped to raise over \$1030 for the benefit of people with AIDS in Mobile and the surrounding areas.

The owners of the Esquire Lounge, Grace and Evelyn, said that the bar owners in Mobile are always ready to support causes like the AIDS benefit. Events like this bring people together and help them realize the desperate plight of some members of the gay community.

According to the last report from the Mobile Health Department there were seven cases of AIDS in Mobile and there had been five deaths previously.

"If anyone would like to donate to the Mobile AIDS Fund, they should contact me at the Esquire House," Grace said. "I'll forward the money to the appropriate people." Contributions should be mailed to MOBILE AIDS FUND, c/o Esquire House, 13 So. Joachim Street, Mobile, Ala. 36602. For additional information call Grace at 433-9175.

"The gay community in Mobile need to remember that the owners of the Esquire House donated their place of business to help relieve the suffering of others," said Rev. Marge Ragona, pastor of Metropolitan Community Church at Mobile. "With the support of people like Grace and Evelyn, the gay/lesbian community knows they have good friends around. The money from last Tuesday's event will help the physicians working with people with AIDS to do just a little more for their patients in this area."

## AIDS BENEFIT A BIG SUCCESS

Anything worth doing is worth doing well. Untiring efforts, time and love went into the Rocky Horror AIDS Benefit Show. Each us owe special thanks and words of appreciation to Nell, the cast and crew and everyone at the Esquire House.

Esquire House wishes to offer special thanks to the cast and crew, also. And a very special thanks to the following donors: Jim and George, Ron, Les, Pete, Glen, Marge, Gary, Larry, MCC, and Osiris.

## SECOND AIDS BENEFIT-- DECEMBER 15, 1985

Club Park Avenue proudly presents the first annual Miss Sisters of Sickness Pageant. This is a CAMP Drag Pageant which is loads of fun. All proceeds will go for AIDS Research. PLAN TO ATTEND.

## Check it Out

Cosmopolitan, December 1985 "Is There Gay Life After AIDS?", Page 198.

Discover, December 1985 "Special Report - AIDS", p.28

# Season's Greetings!



(inside sentiment)  
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